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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 11 May 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

In both word and deed, the new Israeli Government is proving its anti-peace, anti-two-State stance as it persists with unlawful policies and practices entrenching its illegitimate occupation and colonization of the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and systematically and grossly violating the human rights of the Palestinian people.

From the composition of Prime Minister Netanyahu's Cabinet, including a Justice Minister who is on record as calling for violence and destruction against the Palestinian people and calling Palestinian children "little snakes"; to recent announcements to carry on with settlement activities in Occupied East Jerusalem and, particularly, in the so-called "E1 area"; to demolitions of Palestinian properties and seizure of Palestinian homes by settlers; to the forced displacement of hundreds more Palestinian civilians in the West Bank; to the ongoing inhumane and suffocating blockade against the Gaza Strip; to the arrest of more than 100 Palestinians, including children, in the span of just one week; and to the ongoing violent assaults on Palestinian civilians by the Israeli occupying forces and settlers — it is clear that Israel, the occupying Power, is not interested in peace and intends to persist with its destructive and colonial occupation policies in grave breach of international law, flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions and absolute contempt of the international community.

On 7 May, shortly after the formation of the new Israeli Government, an announcement was made regarding the approval for construction of 900 more settlement units in the so-called "Ramat Shlomo" settlement in Occupied East Jerusalem. This approval of a previously declared plan will facilitate the actual construction of hundreds more units, to which hundreds more Israeli settlers will be transferred by the occupying Power, in direct contravention of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as other relevant provisions of international law,

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including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Such actions further undermine the contiguity of the Palestinian land and the viability of the two-State solution, making a mockery of international calls and efforts to salvage and actually implement that solution.

Clearly, this extremist government is bent on pursuing the aggressive, unlawful measures that have been Israeli policy for decades with the aim of pushing the Palestinian people off their land. In addition to settlement expansion, on 4 May, the occupying Power approved plans for the demolition of tents and homes in the village of Khirbet Susiya, near Al-Khalil, in order to advance plans to build a park for settlers in the area. If not stopped, such demolitions will render homeless 450 Palestinians, including 120 children, and forcibly displace them from their land, in breach of international law.

Palestinian civilians in the northern Jordan Valley also continue to be displaced as a result of so-called "military training exercises". Bedouin and herding communities have repeatedly borne the brunt of such practices. Recently, 320 Palestinians were temporarily forced to leave their homes and livestock owing to these activities, which, in the past, have led to the destruction of Palestinian land and property in the area, including the burning of 3,000 dunums of crops after a fire caused by military drills on 28 April and the burning of 5,000 dunums of land on 4 May owing to heavy military fire. Such Israeli practices are widely considered to be among the many means used to engender fear and uncertainty among Palestinians in the Jordan Valley area, increasing pressure on them to leave their land and thus facilitating further de facto annexation by the occupying Power.

Simultaneously, Israeli settlers continue their terror rampages and seizures of Palestinian properties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Recently, this has included assaults on Palestinian men, another hit-and-run incident in which a five-year-old Palestinian child was struck by a settler's car and the destruction of a water network affecting at least 40 homes in Al-Khalil. Also, on 6 May, in the Silwan neighbourhood of Occupied East Jerusalem, a group of Israeli extremists, comprising 20 settler youth and backed by occupying forces, overtook yet another Palestinian home, raiding and seizing the home while the Palestinian family that owns the home was away. Such settler depravity is undoubtedly fuelled by the constant provocation and incitement by Israeli political leaders, including members of the new Israeli Government, and by the absolute impunity enjoyed by the settlers, who are never held accountable for their crimes against Palestinians.

This protection crisis persists also as a result of the excessive, indiscriminate force constantly used by the occupying forces against the Palestinian civilian population in breach of international humanitarian law. Military raids in which civilians are shot at are the daily norm in the West Bank and civilians in the blockaded Gaza Strip, particularly near the border areas and at sea, also continue to be targeted by Israeli fire. Moreover, the occupying forces continue to fire at civilian demonstrators, including, most recently, during demonstrations marking World Press Freedom Day, during which at least 13 Palestinians, including two children and five journalists, were injured.

Moreover, Palestinian civilians continue to be targeted for arrest and detention by the Israeli occupying forces, with an average of 100 persons arrested per week, including children and women, in violation of the Geneva Conventions. Their plight during incarceration is marked by unbearable physical and psychological

mistreatment and grave affronts to their human dignity. In this regard, I draw attention to the arrest of another democratically elected Palestinian official, Khalida Jarrar, a parliamentarian in the Palestinian Legislative Council. Ms. Jarrar was seized from her home by occupying forces in Ramallah on 2 April and sentenced to a six-month administrative detention. She has clearly been targeted for her peaceful, non-violent, legitimate activities in rejection of the occupation, similar to so many Palestinian political prisoners. We call for her immediate release and the release of Palestinian prisoners and detainees so wrongfully being held captive by Israel.

We reiterate the call on the international community to uphold its responsibilities, especially the Security Council, to put an end to Israel's settlement colonization, destructive measures and collective punishment of the Palestinian people. Collective and concrete action is needed to hasten the end of this illegitimate, immoral and inhumane occupation and the realization of Palestinian freedom. We will continue to seek the support and action of the international community for this objective and continue our pursuit of all peaceful, political and legal means to achieve the rights of the Palestinian people, including through our status as the 123rd State party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, a non-violent, legal path to confront Israeli impunity and attain justice for our people.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 542 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 1 May 2015 (A/ES-10/678-S/2015/309), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people. Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations